

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 01151 260710Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSC-01 CPR-01 NEA-10
/104 W

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P R 260551Z APR 78
FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0526
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1151

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR PDIP CH US

SUBJ: REPORTED SELECTION OF AMBASSADOR CHAI TSE-MIN AS PRCLO CHIEF

1. REUTERS PEKING BUREAU CHIEF MCKENZIE WILL SHORGLY BE
FILING STORY ON RUMORED APPOINTMENT OF FORMER PRC AMBASSADOR
TO THAILAND CHAI TSE-MIN AS NEW PRCLO CHIEF. MCKENZIE
TOLD USLO IN CONFIDENCE THAT TWO CHINESE SOURCES HAD CONFIRMED
APPOINTMENT TO HIM OVER PAST FEW DAYS.

2. THAT CHAI IS IN LINE TO BECOME CHIEF, PRCLO WILL COME
AS NO SURPRISE TO ADDRESSEES. A SENIOR PRC AMBASSADOR, CHAI
HAS BEEN MENTIONED IN BANGKOK AND PEKING RUMOR MILLS FOR SOME
TIME AS THE LIKELY ULTIMATE SUCCESSOR TO HUANG CHEN.

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3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH CHAI HAS NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN US AFFAIRS
TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, HE IS A SEASONED DIPLOMAT WITH CONSIDERABLE
EXPERIENCE IN KEY POSTS. BEGINNING IN 1961, CHAI HAS SERVED
AS PRC AMBASSADOR TO HUNGARY (1961-64), GUINEA (1964-67),
EGYPT (1970-74), AND THAILAND (1975-78). LIKE VIRTUALLY
ALL CHINESE AMBASSADORS, CHAI RETURNED TO THE PRC
DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION; HE EXPERIENCED NO PROBLEMS

DURING THAT ERA, HOWEVER, JUDGING FROM HIS SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENT TO THE KEY CAIRO SLOT. FROM 1974 TO 1975 CHAI SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION FOR FRIENDSHIP WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES. WHILE IN CAIRO CHAI REPORTEDLY NEGOTIATED ESTABLISHMENT OF PRC DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NIGERIA AND HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GHANAIAN AMBASSADOR ON RESUMPTION OF PRC-GHANA RELATIONS IN 1971.

4. ACCORDING TO THAI EMBASSY CONTACTS, CHAI WAS AN ACTIVIST AMBASSADOR IN BANGKOK, MAKING A WIDE CIRCLE OF THAI ACQUAINTANCES AND ADOPTING A MORE FORTHCOMING POSTURE THAN IS THE NORM FOR CHINESE AMBASSADORS. CHAI REPORTEDLY ENJOYED A REPUTATION FOR INTELLIGENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS WHILE SERVING THERE.

5. ASSUMING THAT CHAI HAS IN FACT BEEN TAPPED AS PRCLO CHIEF, WE BELIEVE THAT PRIMARY FACTORS IN HIS SELECTION ARE HIS EXPERIENCE AND DIPLOMATIC SKILLS.
WOODCOCK

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